

- 30 -

C L A I M S

1. A method for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider (SP, SS) and a service requestor (SC) for services having a respective number of service specifications, characterized by the steps of:

- a) receiving (710; 910) said contract data included into the request, with which the service is requested, wherein said contract data comprises contract selection parameters for selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts,
- b) evaluating (720 to 780; 720 to 770, 980 to 990) said contract selection parameters,
- c) selecting one particular contract according to said evaluation and further selection logic.
- d) providing (790; 995) the service according to said contract.

2. A method for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider (SP) and a service requestor (SC) for services having a respective number of service specifications characterized by the steps of:

- a) creating said contract data comprising contract selection parameters for selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts,
- b) including said contract data into a request for said service,
- c) issuing (710; 910) said request for said service via network,

- 31 -

d) receiving (790; 995) the service according to said selection.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said contract data is processed via software interfaces adapted to comprise said contract data, said interfaces comprising respective definitions of the transport protocol in use, of the messaging protocol in use and on an associated port type in use.

4. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said contract data is processed within header fields of a web service request.

5. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said contract data is processed as a part of the endpoint specification of a respective service request.

6. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said contract selection parameters are transported in a SOAP message conforming to the SOAP standard.

7. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein multiple contract selection parameters are combined in a single service request.

8. The method according to the preceding claim 1 or 2, wherein said contract selection parameters comprise meta- data identifying a particular contract.

9. A service provider computer server system for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding

- 32 -

contracts exists between a service provider (SP, SS) and a service requestor (SC) for services having a respective number of service specifications, comprising a functional component for performing the steps of:

- a) receiving (710; 910) said contract data included into the request, with which the service is requested, wherein said contract data comprises contract selection parameters for selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts,
- b) evaluating (720 to 780; 720 to 770, 980 to 990) said contract selection parameters,
- c) selecting one particular contract according to said evaluation and further selection logic.
- d) providing (790; 995) the service according to said contract.

10. A service requester computer server system for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider (SP) and a service requestor (SC) for services having a respective number of service specifications, comprising a functional component for performing the steps of:

- a) creating said contract data comprising contract selection parameters for selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts,
- b) including said contract data into a request for said service,
- c) issuing (710; 910) said request for said service via network,
- d) receiving (790; 995) the service according to said selection.

- 33 -

11. A computer program for execution in a data processing system comprising computer program code portions for performing respective steps of the method according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 8, when said computer program code portions are executed on a computer.

12. A computer program product stored on a computer usable medium comprising computer readable program means for causing a computer to perform the method of anyone of the claims 1 to 8, when said computer program product is executed on a computer.